



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

DR. T. C. DAS GUPTA, M.A., PH.D.

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimadud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimadud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimadud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahajahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bâraduari Ghar, Bângâlâ Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crozes* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kansa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajanandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akura visited Nandagram in Brajmandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajmandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadwip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadwip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *vis.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakta cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consisted of Shiva on—part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakta goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakta cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, viz., Kubjanath and Dhruva-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Nashu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



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Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



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It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



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The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajamandal followed by Brakabhandu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *viz.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kampsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bishram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bishram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakta cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consisted of 51 parts fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakta goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakta cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kujja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, *viz.*, Kujjanath and Dhruba-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimadud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimadud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimadud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bâraduari Ghar, Bângālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

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Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crozes* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrugna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



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It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



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The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajmandal followed by Balakrishna when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajmandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajmandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaishnava saints known as the Vaishnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringer-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kuuda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath, "Sringer-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



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A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part-incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadwip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadwip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attach to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *etc.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work *Krishna-Kirtan*, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kam-inikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The *Harinamamrita Vyakaran* and *Hari-Bhakti-Bilas* are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Ugga) consort of Shiva one part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, viz., Kubjanath and Dhruva-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

DR. TAMONASHCHANDRA DAS GUPTA, M.A., PH. D.

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daulah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daulah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daulah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Dorwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahajahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bâraduari Ghar, Bângālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaitungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *stades* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrugna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhanu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahaban while Brikabhanu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhanu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhanu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja mandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

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A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part-incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



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The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadwip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadwip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, viz., Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari-Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha-Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consort of Shiv one part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, *viz.*, Kubjanath and Dhruba tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajanandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakbanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringer-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringer-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sabaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part-incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



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To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bishram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bishram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consort of Shiv one part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kumbha and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, *viz.*, Kumbhanath and Dhruba-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduārī Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabānu while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kāṁsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopī of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja nandal followed by Brakabhānu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath, "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



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In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Sahajahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaitungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajamandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kuuda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanataua Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath, "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Poja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part-incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *viz.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

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Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

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were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha-Krishna for a future batch to visit.

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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(Reprinted from the Calcutta Review, November, 1937)

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

DR. TAMONASHCHANDRA DAS GUPTA, M.A., PH. D.

Post-Graduate Lecturer, Calcutta University.

JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāradauri Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kāmpsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajamandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringer-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringer-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadwip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadwip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, viz., Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darsan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kobjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bishram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bishram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consist of Bhiv on—parts fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, *viz.*, Kubjanath and Dhruba-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



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there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhanu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahaban while Brikabhanu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhanu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhanu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Brajanandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajanandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajanandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, viz., Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consist of Shiva on part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaisnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kujja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, viz., Kujjanath and Dhruva-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimadud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimadud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimadud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāradauri Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



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The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja-land followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akura visited Nandagram in Braja-land Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Braja-land and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *etc.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work *Krishna-Kirtan*, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sabajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyākaran (Grammar) and another for Darsan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The *Harinamamrita Vyākaran* and *Hari Bhakti-Bilas* are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bishram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bishram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consort of Shiva one part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, *viz.*, Kubjanath and Dhruba-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Nozhu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimadud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimadud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimadud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crozes* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrugna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kāṁsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja-mandal followed by Brakabhanu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

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followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringer-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kuuda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath, "Sringer-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



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A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part-incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, viz., Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work *Krishna-Kirtan*, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The *Harinamamrita Vyakaran* and *Hari Bhakti-Bilas* are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha-Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consort of Shiva—the part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Rival) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, viz., Kubjanath and Dhruba-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

DR. TAMONASHCHANDRA DAS GUPTA, M.A., PH. D.

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Sahajahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crozes* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahaban while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja mandal followed by Brakabhānu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



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courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



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To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalyaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darshan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Urga) consort of Shiva one part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, viz., Kubjanath and Dhruba tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimadud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimadud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimadud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāradauri Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrugna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brājamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Rātha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaishnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja nandal followed by Brikabhānu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaishnava saints known as the Vaishnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringer-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringer-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Poja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



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In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahaban while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kāṁsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nan la deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja-land followed by Br kabhānu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaisnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dharmayajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaisnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gador Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part-incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *viz.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejnt Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyākaran (Grammar) and another for Darśan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyākaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

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were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

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(Reprinted from the Calcutta Review, November, 1937)

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A VISIT TO BRINDABAN

DR. TAMONASHCHANDRA DAS GUPTA, M.A., PH. D.

Post-Graduate Lecturer, Calcutta University.

JUST on the eve of the Pujas last year I started for Brindaban with a party of nine students belonging to the Sixth Year Indian Vernaculars Department of the Calcutta University *via* Benares and Agra. The object of the tour was to combine the pleasures of an excursion with some enquiries in connection with the Vaisnava period of the Mediaeval Bengali literature and I spared no pains to utilise the brief period of twelve days at my disposal for purpose.

We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimad-ud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimad-ud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimad-ud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnav cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crores* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrughna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhanu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahaban while Brikabhanu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kamsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 32 miles from Mathura. Brikabhanu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhanu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanla deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja mandal followed by Brakabhānu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akrura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akrura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaishnava saints known as the Vaisnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindsaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sahaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringer-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kuuda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindsaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringer-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sahaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadvip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadvip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, *viz.*, Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work *Krishna-Kirtan*, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyākaran (Grammar) and another for Darśan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The *Harinamamrita Vyākaran* and *Hari Bhakti-Bilas* are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejuts Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the *Chaitanya Charitamrita* of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bisram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bisram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakti cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consumed by Shri on- par fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakti goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakti cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



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We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.



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We broke journey at Benares on our way to Brindaban and spent nearly two days hurriedly visiting some places of interest which we thought interesting enough to deserve attention. I may mention, in this connection, the temples of Viswanath and Annapurna, the Hindu University, Sarnath, the Observatory and the Twin Pillars. I was struck by the religious outlook of the Bengali Hindus in contrast with that of the other peoples of India. Last time I happened to visit Puri-Bhubaneswar locality with a batch of students belonging to the Indian Vernaculars Department just as this year I visited Benares. Both the places contain relics of the Saiva cult and preserve associations of Buddhism and Jainism which to some extent subverted or influenced the Hindu cult of Siva. Siva at Bhubaneswar had to contend with the Jaina influence of Khandagiri-Udayagiri while at Benares he had a similar rival in Buddha himself in the neighbouring village of Mrigadava later on known as Sarnath. This place was chosen by Buddha himself as his first preaching centre. In spite of his best efforts perhaps he did not achieve any appreciable success. The Bengali Hindus patronise in a far greater degree the Siva of Benares than they do the Siva at Bhubaneswar. Its chief reason is not far to seek. Orissa has certain folk-lore similar to the folk-songs of Bengal in honour of Siva. Bengal and Orissa being for a pretty long time under one political domination developed many common points of culture and religion having drawn their inspiration from the Non-Aryan South. But when the outlook changed and the agricultural god Siva of Bengal became fully Aryanised, Bengal looked more to



Benares than to Orissa for its religious inspiration. Hence, Benares became a great centre of pilgrimage for the Bengali. This happened to such an extent that the Bengali gradually began to settle at Benares in large numbers and in course of time made the town an adjunct of Bengal. Under the circumstances, the Sivayana literature of Bengal has very little to do with the traditions of the god of Benares, though the Annadamangal of Bharat Chandra has many references to the god and the place. As regards Sarnath the stupendous stupa and the excavations around, inflamed the imagination of the students and made them think of the past greatness of India. The same, however, cannot be said of the recent architecture and paintings of Mulagandhakuti-vihara (a neighbouring building) belonging to a certain Ceylonese organisation. The fresco-paintings here were executed by the celebrated Japanese artist, Mr. Noshu. These seemed excellent indeed, but whether the combination of the ideal of Ajanta School of painting with that of the Japanese School is at all happy—is for connoisseurs to decide.

Leaving Benares we reached Agra on the 15th October. There, we passed two days in sight-seeing. The fine Moghul architecture and sculpture as represented in the Tajmahal, Agra Fort, Sikandra, Itimadud-daullah and Fatehpur-Sikri overwhelmed us. We also admired the workmanship in some other minor buildings of the place. There may not be any connection of these buildings directly with our literature still their cultural value is immense. The beautiful queen of the Mausoleums, the Taj, created an impression in our minds never to be forgotten. The Sikandra, a few miles off from the town, contains the grave of the celebrated Akbar, while the building of Itimadud-daullah, as its name indicates, contains the grave of Itimadud-daullah (Nurjahan's father) and of his family. All these fine buildings are splendid monuments of Moghul architecture. At Sikri the Moghul art is relieved here and there with specimens of Hindu and Chinese arts. Besides, the stupendous gate of Sikri known as the Buland-Durwaza with huge flights of stairs cannot escape one's notice. The grand buildings at Agra overlooking the Taj contain many reminiscences of Sahajahan and Aurangzeb. The buildings as described in our old Bengali literature bear some resemblance to the specimens of architecture in the Up-country so far as hugeness and general plans are concerned. Here we miss, however, our Bāraduari Ghar, Bāngālā Ghar and the huge tanks, but nevertheless there are the



Jaltungi pillars, courtyards and compounds as described in our Bengali literature. Our literature describes a combination of Hindu and Indo-Saracenic art in the construction of towns and buildings, as a natural sequel to the composition of many literary works during Islamic rule in Bengal.

We left Agra on Saturday, the 17th and reached Brindaban the same evening. The whole journey from Howrah to Brindaban in spite of occasional stoppages was extremely tiresome. However, we reached our destination safely. Our stay in the place was for nearly six days, and we finished our work as much as possible with haste within this short time. On reaching the destination our dream was somewhat shaken regarding the idyllic land of Lord Krishna. The present Brindaban is a small town with narrow streets and lanes and closely packed buildings. The town once stood on the very bank of the tortoise-infested Jamuna but now the river has receded considerably from the town leaving only a sandy waste in the intervening space.

Brindaban possesses some fine temples, relics and associations (some genuine and some spurious) in connection with the Vaishnava cult which deserve our close attention, specially as we are interested in Bengali literature which contains many references to Vaisnavism.

Regarding the topography of the place we should make it clear that the present town of Brindaban is situated in the region called Brajamandal which is about 84 *crozes* in circumference. The locality was under the Kings of Mathuramandal, Madhuban or Surasena country as it remains to-day under the District Officer of the District of Mathura. Madhuban became famous in the Ramayana story as the place of Laban Daitya evidently a non-Aryan chief, who was defeated and killed by Rama's youngest brother, Satrugghna, whose family henceforth ruled the land for a long time. Most of the buildings of the present town of Brindaban are hardly two hundred and fifty years old and its former name was Fakirabad. Yet the traditions of the place are much older than its present buildings and the town began to grow from the days of Sanatana Goswami who belonged to the middle of the 16th century. Both the towns of Mathura and Brindaban stand on the same bank of the Jamuna and there is nothing to prove that they once occupied opposite banks as some scholars would have us believe. The town of Brindaban is only six miles to the west of the town of Mathura. On the opposite bank of Mathura some four miles to the east lies the locality of Gokula. According to a local tradition



there were two chiefs who lived side by side in Gokula. One of them was Nanda Ghosh (foster father of Sree Krishna) and the other was Brikabhānu (father of Sree Radha). Nanda Ghosh's place was known as Mahabān while Brikabhānu's place was known as Raul where Radha was born. Nanda, after keeping baby Sree Krishna in his custody when stolen from the palace of Kāṁsa, king of Mathura, found it unsafe to remain within so short a distance from Mathura only the river Jamuna intervening. So, he shifted from Gokula and established himself at a place called after him Nandagram which was about 22 miles from Mathura. Brikabhānu also changed his place and settled within three miles from Nanda's new town. Brikabhānu's new place was known as Barshān. Both Nandagram and Barshān are within Brajamandal and are situated along with Mathura on the right bank of the Jamuna and therefore on the same side. The Dan-ghat (*lit.* Toll-collecting Ghat) associated with Krishna's sports with Radha on a boat, is about 19 miles to the west of the town of Brindaban whilst Mathura stands to its east and in this locality is situated the traditional hillock Gobardhan. Both the Dan-ghat on the Jamuna and the Gobardhan are over twenty-two miles from Mathura town. The whole region of Brajamandal, as we were told, is full of pasture lands, and some parts of it, as seen by us, corroborate this fact.

It is very difficult to reconcile the different theories regarding the topography of Brajamandal and Mathuramandal. Some scholars would say that the river originally flowed between the towns of Brindaban and Mathura and now both occupy the same bank owing to the Jamuna changing its course. Unfortunately there is nothing to substantiate or corroborate it although there are some signs of erosion and slight changes in the course of the river. Some would resent even the very name of Radha as fictitious and of later introduction while our whole Vaisnava lyrical literature depends on her existence not only spiritually but also physically to illustrate "parakiyā" amours of Radha-Krishna. Even admitting that there was a Radha the Bengali Vaisnavas of Brindaban will never agree to her carrying milk-pail to Mathura as she was a princess and her father was supposed to have been more powerful than Nanda. If at all she carried the milk-pail and met Sree Krishna on the Dan-ghat, it was at a place far removed from Mathura which stands on the same side with Barshān and Dan-ghat. If we believe in the topography then selling of milk by the Gopis of Brindaban in the market of the Mathura town cannot stand as a credible



suggestion. Then also falls through the consequent amours of Radha-Krishna on the Jamuna. To meet the situation, the Bengali Vaishnavas of Brindaban would invent a myth,—that it was done supernaturally, and thereby the distance was covered. A parallelism is drawn with the opening and closing of petals of a lotus. The closing of petals means shortening the distance and opening up means its lengthening. All of course was possible due to the divine and sportive nature of Sree Krishna. What comment should we make on this?

The whole topography of the place as it now stands does not support the amours of Radha and Krishna on the Jamuna unless we place the whole scene in Gokula which, as I have already said, lies to the east of Mathura on the other bank of the Jamuna about four miles off. According to the legend Nanda deserted Mahaban in Gokula and went to live in Nandagram in Braja-mandal followed by Br. kabhānu when Krishna was only a baby. For a mere baby to have taken part in the sports described by Bengali Vaishnava poets is a manifest impossibility. Besides, we know Akura, the messenger of king Kamsa, invited and took with him Krishna and Balaram from Nandagram and not from Mahaban to Mathura to attend the 'Dhanuryajna' of Kamsa who was ultimately killed by Sree Krishna. At the time Akura visited Nandagram in Brajamandal Krishna was making love to Radha and other Gopis and performing various feats to astonish his brother cowboys. So the whole scene of the Krishna legend in connection with his love-making to Radha requires to be placed in Brajamandal and not in Gokula, considering the location of the place, unless we take the help of divine dispensation. To account for things, is it reasonable to dismiss all the local identification of places and find out new ones to support the scenes of the Radha-Krishna legend?

The basis of our own lyrical literature wholly depends on the reality of the amorous sports (*Lila*) of Radha and Krishna by the side of and on the bosom of the river Jamuna. What will be the condition of Dankhanda and Naukakhanda of Sree-Krishna-Kirtan attributed to one Chandidas and the lyrics of other poets if we do not admit their connection with these amours?

The town of Brindaban, as it stands to-day, owes its origin to the efforts of Sanatana and other Bengali Vaishnava saints known as the Vaishnava Goswamis. How Sanatana built his first temple of Madanmohan with the help of a merchant is a story even now on everybody's lips at Brindaban. After this temple many others



followed, the chief of which are those of Govindaji and Gopinath. Besides these, there are hundreds of other temples. Among them the temple of Sabaji, the temple of Sethji, the temples of Bankubehari, Radha-Damodar, Syamsundar, Radhaballav, Radharaman, Gokulananda, Holkar's temple, Tarash temple, Lala Babu's temple, besides Tarakumar's Asram, Adwaita-bat, Sringar-bat, Tentul-tala, Jamuna Pulin, Kaliya Daman, Brahma Kunda, Nidhuban and Nikunjaban, deserve special notice. Of the above, Madanmohan as we have said was installed by Sanatana Goswami. In this temple many relics of Chaitanya Dev and his followers are found. Unfortunately, the original images of Madanmohan and Radharani are not to be found as they were long ago taken away by the Raja of Karauli. The temple of Gopinath attributed to Madhu Pandit and associated with the family of Nityananda is an important one. The temple of Govindaji, though built by the Raja of Jaipur has Bengali association. It is a remarkably fine specimen of Hindu temple architecture. The temple of Radharaman has associations with Gopal Bhatta Goswami. The temple of Gokulananda possesses the memory of Lokenath. "Sringar-bat" has associations with Nityananda, "Adwaita-bat" of Adwaita and "Tentul-tala" (Tamarind tree shade) of Chaitanya Dev. Under the shade of this latter tree Chaitanya Dev used to sit during his brief visit to Brindaban, meditating about Lord Krishna and the place was once situated overlooking the Jamuna. The temple of Radha-Damodar bears reminiscences of Jib Goswami; the Bankubehari temple of the Nimbarka sect and the Radhaballav temple of the Ballavi sect also deserve mention. The images in the temple built by the Tarash Zemindar family are remarkable for their beauty. It may be mentioned here that almost all the images in various temples are remarkably handsome. The two temples of Sabaji and Sethji and specially that of Sethji may be said to be the grandest in Brindaban. This temple of Sethji is a very fine specimen of Hindu temple-building. Its type is South-Indian and the South-Indian priests prevail there. The temple is attributed to Jagat Seth. Though he was not a South-Indian himself it bears the stamp of that side as his Guru came from that part of India. This temple was built at an enormous cost and maintains a batch of 108 priests. The expenses of the temple are Rs. 365 per diem. We had the fortune to visit the temple during its annual celebration. The whole scene of the Puja and the procession was indeed majestic creating an atmosphere of the old days of Hindu glory. The Gadur Stambha or pillar in the front



courtyard is coated wholly with gold and the people call it erroneously "Sonar Tal-gachh" (golden palm tree). Its height is about twenty-two feet from the base and looks very impressive. Episodes from Hindu mythology have been engraved on the stone walls all around and the images are marvellously executed. The presiding deity of the temple is of course Krishna named Ranganath. The temple of Sahaji has one very special peculiarity. The marble pillars supporting the roof are zigzag in appearance. Nowhere have we seen pillars of this type. These impressed us by the massiveness of their costly stones as well as by the expenses and workmanship entailed in their execution.

A few remarks may now be made as regards the Vaisnava theology and the position of the Bengali Vaisnavas in Brindaban. The Bengali Vaisnavas belong to that group of the Vaisnavas known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The originator of this group was Chaitanya Dev himself. As is well known at first the God Vishnu was worshipped by the Vaisnavas as the very name of the sect indicates. Then the idea of "Avatar" or incarnation came to the foreground and so we get first Rama as a part incarnation and then Krishna as full incarnation of Vishnu among many of his incarnations, to save the world from the hands of the non-believing sinners. Last of all came Chaitanya Dev whom his followers believe to have been an incarnation of Sree Krishna (not of Vishnu). Apart from the worshippers of Vishnu and Rama those of Sree Krishna and Chaitanya Dev require our close investigation. Among the various qualities of God the two which have attracted the greatest attention of the devotees are the "Aiswaryya," "Guna" and "Madhuryya Rasa." The non-Bengali people of India seem to have been captivated with the former quality of God, while the Bengalis with the latter. Thus we find in the Up-country the Rama cult has more votaries than that of Krishna cult. "Aiswaryya" connotes power and fortune while "Madhuryya" means love. Krishna of course possesses these two qualities in him. The non-Bengalis seem to have more liking for the 'Aiswaryya' quality of Krishna and so they revel in his exploits in Mathura, Dwaraka and in the internecine struggle of the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The Bengalis on the other hand are zealous supporters of the "Madhuryya Rasa" and they have shown their leanings to it so much so that that they did not allow any temple of Lakshmi (Goddess of Fortune) at Brindaban when they found the town. As a result a temple of Lakshmi exists only 3 miles off from Brindaban on the other side of the Jamuna, the place being known as Belban where people



flock to worship her on certain days as they do not like to miss her favour in worldly affairs. Even when we consider this Madhuryya quality we find that there are two views in its connection. Some uphold "Swakiya" view and some "Parakiya" and "Madhura Rasa" being the greatest quality of God, according to some Vaisnavas, it cannot be cultivated adequately by a man with his own wife (Swakiya). This love-making should be done with "Parakiya" which involves great risk and sacrifice. Chaitanya Dev held the Parakiya view. The Maddhi sect to which he belonged was originally a South-Indian sect. His connection with this sect as well as his liking for Ramananda of the Deccan with whom he had a famous conversation about the "Madhura Rasa" seem to have some influence over Chaitanya Dev in establishing the "Parakiya" theory among his followers. Henceforth his followers of Bengal were known as the Gaudiya Vaisnavas.

The chief temple of the Bengali Vaisnavas at Brindaban as referred to before is that of Madanmohan. The Bengalis seem to have forgotten Madhabendra Puri who first found the image of Gopal at Brindaban locality and to whose sect (Maddhi) Chaitanya Dev himself belonged. They only remember Chaitanya and his followers. In every Bengali temple the deified image of Chaitanya is to be found while in most cases we shall miss the same in non-Bengali temples. Now as everybody knows among the three centres of the Bengali Vaisnavas—Navadwip, Puri and Brindaban—Navadwip is more associated with the name of Chaitanya Dev though Puri saw him as a living God during the latter part of his life, while Brindaban was only casually visited by him. So, however much importance Chaitanya Dev himself attributed to Brindaban, his followers were satisfied with his personality and did not think much of that place. The importance which the Gaudiya Vaisnavas attaches to the place is more in connection with Chaitanya Dev and his followers, especially the Goswamis, than with the Radha-Krishna legend.

To the idealists of "Parakiya" the introduction of Radha was essential. She was not the wife of Krishna in her earthly relationship and the love-adventures of the two, viz., Radha and Krishna are illustrative of the "Parakiya" theory of the Bengali Vaisnavas. There is one subordinate element—a kind of subcurrent—furnished in the episode of love-making by Chandravali, the chief rival of Radha in connection with Krishna. Krishna would some time visit Radha some time Chandravali, though Radha had his chief attention. Legends



say many things about the two, even of their previous amours in heaven. It is peculiar in the Bengali poetical work Krishna-Kirtan, that this Chandravali has been identified with Radha while no other Bengali work and Bengali convention support this view. At Brindaban no trace of Chandravali has been found, but we find Radha in every temple. "Radharani" is the term which is on the lips of everybody at Brindaban.

To the Vaisnavas of other provinces the injunction of the six Goswamis have little value. Even a sect of the modern Vaisnavas of Bengal have disclaimed the infallibility of the Goswamis. They are the present "Gaudiya Math" people of Bengal. They are now trying to have a stable footing at Brindaban in spite of the somewhat unfriendly attitude of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas. The extreme wing of the Parakiya preachers are the Sahajiyas. I scented a considerable number of them at this place but have not been able to know much of them for obvious difficulties.

Regarded as a centre of Vaisnava culture and learning the place is not very progressive. However, the Bhakti-Vidyalaya founded under the auspices of the Gaudiya Vaisnavas is doing some good to the Vaisnava public. But its shortness of funds and lack of public sympathy made us have misgivings regarding its future. The school is run mainly through the energetic efforts of Sreejut Kaminikumar Ghosh and his worthy son Dr. Gaurapada Ghosh (both residents of Brindaban) who deserve our unstinted praise. We visited this school and found to our satisfaction that the authorities have opened already two departments, one for Vyakaran (Grammar) and another for Darsan (Philosophy). Of course both are taught on Vaisnava lines. The Harinamamrita Vyakaran and Hari Bhakti-Bilas are the two books of this school read by pupils. We attended one Kirtan party organised at the house of Sreejute Nitai Das and Brindaban Das. Nitai Das is ably editing the Chaitanya Charitamrita of Krishna Das Kaviraj which he showed to us. We could not visit very many parties of Kirtan at the place and so are hardly competent to give any opinion about them.

In every speaker at Brindaban we found great enthusiasm in explaining the sectarian dogmas to strangers, often embellished by supernatural elements. In these stories wonderful dreams figured most though even trees talked. Be that as it may, my tour with the students to Brindaban was fruitful in many ways. Before coming to this place our ideas about its topography in its bearing on the legend of Krishna



were rather hazy. Besides, the references in our own literature made us compare them by a visit to the place for clearing certain problems from our first-hand knowledge. In more sense than one our visit to the place was a success and for this we are grateful to our present Vice-Chancellor. Yet we had our disappointments too. People who come to Brindaban to see holy places visit the whole of Brajamandal. In the open fields they have to live in tents and shift from place to place. But it requires time and money, of both of which we had very little. Under the circumstances we had perforce to remain satisfied by visiting the main temples of the town of Brindaban and leaving the Arcadian country of Braja associated with the hallowed name of Radha-Krishna for a future batch to visit.

We went to Mathura on a flying visit on Wednesday, the 21st October only for a day. What we saw there did not impress us much. We could visit only a few important temples and *ghats*. The *ghats* are Mathura's speciality. Unlike Brindaban the town of Mathura faces the river Jamuna and the whole length of it is studded with fine *ghats*. Here also the Jamuna is full of islets and the railway bridge is doing much harm to it. Among the temples visited by us were those of Dwarkanath, Kubjanath, Kamsamardan, Kalbhairab, Dhruba, Bali and Saptarsi and among the *ghats*, those of Bishram Ghat and Dhruba Ghat. At Bishram Ghat we witnessed that very interesting ceremony the "arati" of the Jamuna. For want of time some of us could not visit Bhuteswar Mahadev* and Radha Kund (22 miles from Mathura). Near the latter, Krishnadas Kaviraj wrote his immortal Chaitanya Charitamrita. The Dan-ghat is also situated as we have said before, in this locality. The chief temple with some air of grandeur is that of Dwarkanath. The other temples are but poor specimens of Hindu architecture. We regret we could not study carefully the specimens at the Mathura Municipal Museum. The Gaudiya theology has failed to strike any deep root at Mathura. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas have very little hold on the people of the town, and as a matter of fact, the Bengali population at Mathura is very small. Chaitanya Dev and his followers seem to have made no impression at this place. Even the cult of Krishna has very

* Perhaps very few people are now aware that Brindaban was an important holy place of the Sakta cult. According to tradition—of the 51 parts of the body of dead Sati (Durga) consort of Shiv one part fell here. It was her hair.

The Sakta goddess here is Uma and Bhairab (Siva) is known as Bhutesh. This shows that the Sakta cult prevailed here before the introduction of Vaishnavism.



little "Madhura Rasa" in it, as Krishna in "Aiswaryya" is being shown all over the town. Thus in place of Radha, Kubja and Rukmini figure prominently, and in two places, viz., Kubjanath and Dhruva-tilā Vishnu with four arms with Sankha, Chakra, Gadā and Padma figures and not Krishna with his flute. From what I have seen in Brindaban-Mathura locality may I surmise that after the demise of Chaitanya Dev at Puri, the Goswamis found it hard to hold ground in favour of their own theology and so being disappointed sent back their valuable literary productions to Bengal—their own land—for preservation? They were not far wrong in their apprehensions as we can guess from the present condition of Brindaban.

We would have been glad to secure some old Vaishnava manuscripts but unfortunately could secure none. We heard valuable Vaishnava manuscripts may be found in the temple of Radha-Damodar (place of Jiv Goswami) which is now in the hands of a Receiver. So they are difficult to procure but we hope our University will try some day to possess them for the benefit of Vaishnava scholars of Bengal.

In this connection I would like to point out that doubts may lurk in the minds of some regarding the utility of sending students of this Department outside Bengal and not confine their educational activities within the bounds of this province. The condition of Bengali language and literature does not warrant such doubts. Such excursions outside Bengal besides broadening the outlook help in the proper understanding of many references and allusions that our literature contains. Of course attention should more be confined to places and regions within Bengal for this purpose.